

I am very pleased to announce today that I am nominating Judge Thurgood Marshall to be Solicitor General of the United States. He will succeed the Honorable Archibald Cox, who is retiring after more than four years of distinguished service to return to Massachusetts. The Solicitor General directs all Government litigation before the Supreme Court of the United States and the other appellate courts. Judge Marshall brings to that significant job an outstanding record of legal and judicial experience.

He has served on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit since 1962, and at very considerable financial sacrifice is resigning in order to meet the needs of his Government.

For a quarter of a century before his appointment to the Bench, Judge Marshall was the leading legal champion of equal rights under the law, appearing before the Supreme Court more than 30 times. His vast experience in the Federal courts and especially in the Supreme Court has gained Judge Marshall a reputation as one of the most distinguished advocates in the Nation. I know him to be a lawyer and a judge of very high ability, a patriot of deep convictions, and a gentleman of undisputed integrity.

So it is an honor to appoint him as the 33rd Solicitor General of the United States. He is here this afternoon and I would like to ask him to stand.

Judge Marshall.

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I intend to nominate Mr. Leonard Marks of Washington, D. C., to be the Director of the United States Information Service, succeeding the Honorable Carl Rowan.

Mr. Marks has an excellent record as a teacher, lawyer, and government servant. President Kennedy appointed him to be an original member of the Board of Directors of the Communications Satellite Corporation in 1962. Since that time, he has been reappointed.

Mr. Marks, who has had a long interest in international communications, has represented the United States at broadcasting conferences and activities in Italy, India, Pakistan, Switzerland, Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran.

Phillip Talbot, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, will be nominated as United States Ambassador to Greece. He will succeed Henry R. Labouisse, who is Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund.

A most experienced foreign service officer, Raymond A. Hare, who is presently Ambassador to Turkey, will succeed him in his post as Assistant Secretary of State. Ambassador Hare has been in the Foreign Service since 1927. He has served in France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, the United Arab Republic, and Yemen.

I have asked Mrs. Penelope Hartland Thunberg of Maryland to become a member of the United States Tariff Commission. She will serve in the position last held by Commissioner Walter Schreiber for a term expiring June 16, 1970.

Mrs. Thunberg is an international economist presently serving as Deputy Chief of the International Division, Economic and Research Area, Central Intelligence Agency. She was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate from Pembroke College and holds the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Radcliffe College.

She is here this afternoon and I would like you to meet her. Please stand up.

Yesterday, the Soviet Government notified the U.S. Government that it is agreeable to the resumption of negotiations of the 18-nation Disarmament Committee at Geneva. The United States has suggested a date no later than July 27 for this resumption. Mr. William C. Foster now is in the process of inquiring whether this date is agreeable to the other 16 members of the Disarmament Committee.

At the conclusion of the Geneva Conference last September, it was agreed that the two co-chairmen, the Soviet Union and the United States, would consult and would agree on a date for resumption, after which the other members of the committee would be consulted in order to obtain their agreement as well.

Mr. Foster met with the Soviet spokesman in New York on June 15 and 16, on instructions to urge reconvening of the Disarmament Committee as soon as possible. Yesterday's Soviet response is an encouraging development. As we have stated before, peace is the leading item on the agenda of mankind and every effort should be made to lead us toward that goal.

As I stated in San Francisco, we will come to these negotiations with proposals for effective attack on these deadly dangers to mankind and we hope that others will do the same.

Now I am prepared to take the questions.

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Now I am prepared to take your questions.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in your statement about the situation in Viet Nam, sir, you referred to the necessity for maintaining adequate reserves and adequate equipment. I wonder, sir, in view of the increased fighting and the increasing manpower commitment, are you giving any thought, is the Government giving any thought, first, to calling up additional reserves, or, second, to increasing draft calls.

THE PRESIDENT: The Government is always considering every possibility and every eventuality. No decisions have been made in connection with the reserve or increasing draft calls. We will be in a better position to act upon matters of that kind after the Secretary returns from his trip.

QUESTION: Mr. President, could you tell us whether Governor Harriman's trip to Moscow has any connection with the Soviet position in Viet Nam?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that the Governor has best explained that trip, himself, by saying it is a vacation. That is on the wires today. It is not an official Government trip. He was not sent there by the President, although the Governor is a man of wide range of interests and experience.

I approved hartily of his statement that he would be glad to visit with any people that cared to visit with him. It is a personal trip, and a vacation trip in nature.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what do you think, in your judgment, are the chances of, at this point, of avoiding a major land war in Asia?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that anyone can prophesy what will happen from day to day, or week to week, or month to month.

I think it is well for us to remember that three Presidents have made the pledge for this Nation, that the Senate has ratified the SEATO Treaty by a vote of 82 to 1, pledging the United States to come to the aid of any nation upon their request, who are parties to that Treaty or protocol.

President Eisenhower made our first commitment there in 1954. That was reaffirmed by President Kennedy many times in different ways.

The present President has reiterated the stand of the United States that we expect to keep that commitment. Our National Honor is at stake. Our work is at stake. It must be obvious to all Americans that they would not want the President of their country to follow any course that was inconsistent with our commitments or with our National Honor.

QUESTION: Mr. President, sir, in view of the situation in North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam, are you thinking of continuing the plans for a merger of reserves and the National Guard?

THE PRESIDENT: So far as I am aware, the situation there

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has no effect on the merger one way or the other.

QUESTION: Would it not effect the efficiency of our forces?

THE PRESIDENT: It is contended that the merger would improve the efficiency, but I do not think that it is a matter that would be considered in connection with what happens out there one way or the other.

QUESTION: Mr. President, could you give us a status report on the Air Force's Manned Outer Space Laboratory, specifically whether you intend to give it a "go ahead", and if so, when?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am not in a position to make a statement on that at this time. The Space Council has had some briefings in connection with the matter. There is a study going on every day, in that connection, but I would not want to go further than that, now.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in view of the Disarmament Conference and the Soviet Response, and Ambassador Harriman's conference with the Soviet Union, could you give us your assessment of Soviet-American relations as they stand now? Could you give us a temperature reading?

THE PRESIDENT: We are very anxious to maintain close relations with the Soviet Union, and we had felt that considerable progress had been made in the last several years.

Unfortunately, the situation that developed in North Viet Nam has placed a strain on those relations. We regret it very deeply, but we have felt that as I said earlier, our National Honor required us to pursue the course of conduct that we have followed.

We will be looking for every opportunity that we can to work with the Soviet Union in the interest of peace. We think that the resumption of the Disarmament Conference is one step in that direction. We would like to improve the relations any way we can.

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Mr. President,

QUESTION: /Last week, sir, you stated things in Viet Nam probably will get worse before they can get better. Can you give us any appraisal as to how many troops/are we going to change our fighting or is a new concept going to be introduced? Can you give us any indication of that?

THE PRESIDENT: As I said in my opening statement, the aggression has increased. The forces that are pursuing that aggression have greatly increased in number. It will be necessary to resist that aggression and therefore to have substantially larger increments of troops which we have been supplying from time to time.

I do not think that anyone can tell at this date any special figure that will be required but I think that following Ambassador Lodge's and Secretary McNamara's trip we will have a better estimate of what the rest of the year will hold for us.

QUESTION: Mr. President, some people question the ability of the South Vietnamese to govern themselves at this point, in one instance, by Senator Stennis of Mississippi.

Can you give us any indication of what you see in the future for the re-establishment of civilian rule in Saigon?

THE PRESIDENT: We would hope 'that if the North Vietnamese would cease their aggression we could immediately take steps to have the people of South Vietnam exercise their choice and establish a government of their choosing. We, of course, would hope that that would be a very efficient and effective and democratic system .

QUESTION: Mr. President, would the increasing number of American troops going to Viet Nam, would you say if there will be a continuing or any increasing diplomatic proving for peaceful settlement?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we will constantly be on the alert to probe 'and to be ready and willing to negotiate with the appropriate people. I must say that candor compels me to tell you that there has not been the slightest indication that the other side is interested in negotiation or in unconditional discussions although the United States has made some dozen separate attempts to bring that about.

QUESTION: Mr. President, quite a bit has been written recently about your relations with the press. Some of these stories have been openly critical, to say the least, sir. We seem to have heard from everybody but you.

I wonder if you could give us your views on the subject?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that the press and the Congress and the people of the United States have generally speaking, with very minor exceptions, given me during the time I have been President, very strong support and very excellent cooperation. I know that there are some in each segment that have been disappointed in some of my decisions and some of my actions. I like to think that those who talk about them the most, see us the least, and so far as I am concerned, I have not criticism to make of any other people 'in helping me do my job.

We have a fvery fine Cabinet. Nearly every person I have asked to come help the government has done so. I think that there are very few Presidents in the history of this country that have had more support, more publishers and more magazines, than the present President. I am grateful for that, although I recognize it is an essential part of their duty to point up weaknesses that 'they think exist. I have seen that take place for some 35 years and as long as they point them out, and the manner in which they are pointing them out, and the people continue to support us and the Congress continues to support us, I am not going to find any fault with them. During the period that we have had the most hectic, distressing moments here in Washington, the poll has gone up six percent out in the country. So I sometimes think maybe it is just July in the Nation's Capital.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, are you taking any position at this point on the poll tax repealer in the House versions of the voting rights bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have taken a position since making my recommendations to the Congress early in the year, that I would like to see the poll tax repealed. I am against the poll tax. I have tried to get it repealed every time that I have had a chance, when I thought we could do it legally.

I have asked the Attorney General to attempt to work with the conferees of both House and Senate to see if they cannot agree on satisfactory language that will give us the most effective repeal provision that is obtainable and that we think can be supported in the courts. I have no doubt but what a very satisfactory solution will be found. I think that would be quite desirable.

QUESTION: Mr. President, have you discussed with Leonard Marks yet the particular man or the type of men that you and he might like to fill the other two key vacancies in the USIA, the Deputy Director and the head of the Voice of America?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The Deputy Director is now being handled by a very able man with experience who will be there for a while yet. I am sure that after Mr. Marks reviews the organization and talks to the present Deputy Director and the present Director, Mr. Rowan, he will come up with some suggestions and recommendations. I believe that they will be acceptable.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in view of your long history of seeking to keep civil rights a bipartisan matter, why did you single out the House Republican Leadership for criticism in your statement on voting rights last week?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't single out anyone. We had had several days' debate about the relative merits of two proposals. It had been observed that the Administration proposal was dripping in venom and was inadequate and went too far, and a good many things had been said about it. Finally, when it was put as a test to the judgment of the House, they made their decision.

I commended that decision and said that I believed that they were wise in acting as they had. Had they adopted the so-called Ford or McCullough substitute for the committee bill, as advocated by Judge Howard Smith and Governor Tuck and others, I was of the opinion it would have diluted and taken strength from the bill that they passed.

I am very proud of the action of the House. I am very proud of the judgment they exercised in that connection. But people are allowed to comment on the relative merits of legislation, either before or after a vote, and I found there have been a good many comments on my proposals. I thought it would be appropriate if I carefully limited myself to an observation that the substitute would have diluted the right of every American to vote.

I think all of us are aware of the fact that in years gone by we could have done much more than we have in that field. I have become very conscious of that, as I have traveled over this Nation and talked to our people. I think that the House acted wisely, and I have every confidence in the action that will follow the conference report.

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I ask the cooperation of members of both parties. I do not think the substitute was as effective as the bill that was adopted. I would not like to see us return to it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in connection with civil rights and the colloquy between you and the Republican Leaders, they have suggested that over the years you have changed your position on civil rights. I wondered if you could give us your concept of your developing philosophy on civil rights legislation.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think all of us realize at this stage of the 20th Century there is much that should have been done that has not been done. This bill is not going to solve the problem completely itself. There will be much to be done in the years ahead. I think the problem of the American Negro is one of the two or three most important problems that we must face up to with our legislation again next year.

I am particularly sensitive to the problems of the Negro and the problems of the city and the problems which the shift in population has caused, such as the problem of education. I have task forces working on those things. Perhaps it is because I realize after traveling through 44 States and after reading some 20,000 or 30,000 letters a week, digests from them, it is a very acute problem and one that I want to do my best to solve in the limited time that I am allowed.

I did not have that responsibility in the years past, and I did not feel it to the extent that I do today. I hope that you may understand that I think it is an acute one and a dangerous one and one that occupies high priority and one that should challenge every American of whatever party and whatever religion.

I am going to try to provide all of the leadership that I can, notwithstanding the fact that someone may point to a mistake or 100 mistakes that I made in my past.

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QUESTION: Mr. President, the Soviet Union announced yesterday a new aid agreement to North Viet Nam. I think they said it was over and beyond what they are now supplying. Do you see this as a serious, perhaps dangerous contribution to the increased aggression you spoke of earlier that is being directed from the North?

THE PRESIDENT: Peter, I don't think that we can tell the extent of that agreement and how far it will reach. They gave no figures. They did not explain what materials they were going to supply.

We have known for sometime now that they are furnishing equipment and they are furnishing supplies and they are making contributions of aid in one form or the other to North Viet Nam; this is no surprise to us at all.

I read the very general announcement that they have made. There is nothing that I could detect from it or that our experts could detect that would give me any more information than contained in the announcement.

Mr. Scali?

QUESTION: Do you think it possible that increased aggression and infiltration by North Viet Nam springs from a mis-reading on the other side, a perhaps mistaken belief that the teach-ins and whatever criticism there has been here in the United States of your policy represent the voice of the American people?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think that the teach-ins and the differences of opinion have increased the strength of the North Vietnamese or the aggression that has taken place.

I do think that at times our allies, particularly the South Vietnamese people, particularly our own soldiers, do get concerned about how strong we are behind them and how united we are in this very serious undertaking.

I am glad to say that I don't think it has had any serious or damaging effect there. I get several letters a day from soldiers in Viet Nam, service people, the Navy, Marines, Army and Air. I hear from their parents. I have yet to receive a single complaining letter.

On occasions, they wish that the folks back home, who are following this with such dedicated interest, understood the position as they feel they understand it. I don't think it has damaged our effort out there and I don't think it will. I think we will be united in this effort.

There will be some differences of opinion about the wisdom of some courses that the President takes, the Executive takes. But whenever and wherever we can, we will try to explain those to the people involved and at least try to get their understanding.

Mr. Donovan?

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QUESTION: There have been reports published from time to time that you might contemplate a change in the Office of the Secretary of State. In the months to come, do you foresee such a change?

THE PRESIDENT: None whatever. I think you do a great damage and great disservice to one of the most able and most competent and most 'dedicated men I have ever known, Secretary Rusk. He sits to my right in the Cabinet room. He ranks first in the Cabinet and he ranks first with me, Mr. Rogers.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there are two recently published versions as to how President Kennedy selected you as his running mate in 1960, Mr. Graham's and Mr. Schlesinger's. Which of these, in your judgment,, is closest to the truth, or do you have your own version?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not want to get into a dispute with my friends who have written these memorandums. I don't see anything to be gained by that. The President asked me on his own motion to go on the ticket with him and I gave him my reasons for hesitating. He told me he would speak to Speaker Rayburn and others, and he did. Subsequently, he called me and said, "Here's a statement I am going to read on television, unless you have an objection." I listened to it. After I heard it, I felt that I should do what I did. I don't know just how much these men may know about actually what happened, but they are entitled to their opinions. Of course, I know why I did what I did.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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(AT 1:32 P.M.)